

Message Text

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PAGE 01 TRIPOL 00818 180854 Z

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C O N F I D E N T I A L TRIPOLI 0818

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E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: CPAS LY

SUBJECT: PASSPORT PROBLEM: PRESSURE FROM ESSO LIBYA
PRESIDENT AND UK AMBASSADOR

1. PRESIDENT OF ESSO LIBYA, GERALD COX, CALLED ON CHARGE JUNE 13 PRIMARILY TO DISCUSS LIBYAN PASSPORT PROBLEM. SAID HE WAS VERY CONCERNED OVER ITS POSSIBLE EFFECTS, UNLESS SETTLED SOON, ON THE QUALITY OF HIS STAFFING PATTERN. BY THIS HE MEANT NOT THE IMMEDIATE PROBLEM OF GETTING IN EXPATRIATE SECRETARIES (NON- AMERICAN) BUT ESSENTIALLY THE RECRUITMENT DIFFICULTIES IN HIRING GOOD AMERICAN ENGINEERS, ETC. FOR INSTANCE, RIGHT NOW ESSO IS TRYING TO PERSUADE ITS SEVENTH REPEAT SEVENTH CHOICE TO TAKE THE KEY JOB OF MANAGER FOR THE BREGA LNG PLANT; ALL THEIR PRIOR CHOICES WERE APPARENTLY SCARED OFF BY TALES OF PASSPORT DIFFICULTIES, AMONG OTHERS.

2. COX NOTED THDT 14 COUNTRIES INCLUDING FRANCE AND USSR HAD ACHIEVED MODUS VIVENDI WITH LARG, WHILE U. S. AND OTHERS HOLDING OUT ON PRINCIPLE. CLAIMED HE AS PREPARED AS ANY TO FACE THE CONSEQUENCES FOR HIS COMPANY IF IT REALLY NECESSARY AND FIRM USG POLICY TO HOLD THE LINE. POINTED OUT, HOWEVER, THAT JUST AS IN OIL NEGOTIATIONS WITH LARG, IF YOU ARE GOING TO CRATER EVENTUALLY IT IS FOOLISH TO BE ONE OF THE LAST TO DO SO; BY THEN THE ANTE WILL BE UPPED. HAS
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PAGE 02 TRIPOL 00818 180854 Z

USG CONSIDERED THIS, HE ASKED.

3. CHARGE ASSURED COX THAT DEPT FOLLOWING PASSPORT SITUATION CLOSELY. HIS OWN FEELING WAS, HOWEVER, THAT SINCE IN MID- MAY THE DEPT HAD MADE VERY HIGH- LEVEL DETERMINATION ON THE STAND TO TAKE, THE MOST LIKELY OUTCOME OF ANY REVIEW WOULD BE A REITERATION THEREOF. HE WOULD OF COURSE REPORT COX' S VIEWS AND BELIEVED INDUSTRY APPROACHES DIRECT TO DEPT WERE THEREFORE UNNECESSARY. ALSO POINTED OUT PASSPORT PROBLEM FOR AMERICANS RIGHT NOW FELL MUCH MORE HEAVILY ON DIPLOMATS THAN ON OIL COMPANIES. IF DEPT CAVED, LONG TERM RESULTS FOR AMERICAN COMMUNITY MIGHT WELL BE WORSE, AS LARG WOULD LIKELY START ABOLISHING ITS PRESENT EXCEPTIONS WHICH SOLVE PROBLEM FOR NEARLY ALL AMERICANS. COX ACKNOWLEDGED THAT TRUE AND SAID ALL HE WAS SUGGESTING WAS A REVIEW OF POLICY IN LIGHT OF POSSIBILITY THAT EVENTUALLY USG WOULD HAVE TO CASE.

4. LATER JUNE 13 MOBIL PRESIDENT WILLIAM WISEMAN EXPRESSED SOME OF SAME CONCERNS TO CHARGE, BUT LESS POINTEDLY. EVENING JUNE 14 UK AMBASSADOR TRIPP ATTEMPTED PERSUADE CHARGE TIME HAD COME TO STEP OFF PRINCIPLE AND GO THE FRENCH ROUTE, EMPHASIZING FRENCH PUT NOTHING IN WRITING AND CAME HOME FREE WITH A VAGUE, VERBAL AND VERY LIMITED " ACCEPTANCE" OF LARG DEMAND -- ACTUALLY NOT THAT AT ALL, AS LIBYANS HAVE TO DO THE TRANSLATING. CHARGE REMINDED HIM BRITISH WERE THE FIRST TO BREAK THE NATO COM' S PROPOSAL OF APRIL 29 BY INSISTING THAT IT CONTRARY TO BASIC PRINCIPLES; NOW HE WAS PROPOSING A

FURTHER BREAK WITH ALLIED UNITY, SUCH AS IT WAS. TRIPP REPLIED THE FRENCH HAD ALREADY BROKEN IT, WITH WHICH CHARGE COULD ONLY AGREE BUT OBSERVE THAT ALL WAS NOT LOST YET. CHARGE AGREED ONLY THAT WE HAD REACHED SOME SORT OF DIVIDING LINE AND STRATEGY HAD TO BE REVIEWED AGAIN.

5. OF RELEVANCE IN ANY SUCH REVIEW IS FACT MFA STILL CLAIMS IT HAS NO CLARIFICATION OF QADHAFI STATEMENT.

6. COMMENT: AS REPORTED SEPARATELY (TRIPOLI 0817), MANY
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PAGE 03 TRIPOL 00818 180854 Z

MORE COUNTRIES ARE " ACCEPTING" ARABIC. ONCE AGAIN NATO HAS TORPEDOED ITSELF. NEVERTHELESS, FAVOR CONTINUED USG RESISTANC, EVEN IF WE HAVE TO GO IT ALONE. COUNTRY TEAM AGREES. EMBASSY ITSELF CAN CERTAINLY HOLD OUT THIS SUMMER, AND SO CAN COMMUNITY. THE COMMUNITY AS SUCH HAS NO NOTABLE PASSPORT PROBLEM FOR TIME BEING. ITS FUTURE HERE DEPENDS ON LARG OIL POLICWGM SO LONG AS COMPANIES HAVE A PLACE IN THAT CONTEXT, THE NECESSARY AMERICANS AND THEIR DEPENDENTS WILL GET IT. THEREAFTER THEY WILL NOT, BUT THIS HAS LITTLE TO

DO WITH THE PASSPORTS ISSUE. IN ESSENCE THAT ISSUE IS
WHETHER ONE COUNTRY CAN DICTATE TO ANOTHER THE FORM IN WHICH
IT ISSUES ITS PASSPORTS.

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